

**Question for written answer P-010244/2012
to the Commission**
Rule 117
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Subject: Human rights violations in Tibet

On 8 November 2012, the eve of the opening of the Chinese Communist Party congress which was to appoint Xi Jinping as the next President of the country, five Tibetans, demanding the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and the protection of their fundamental rights from violations by the Chinese authorities, committed self-immolation in remote areas of China. They included three young monks, between 15 and 16 years of age. This is the largest number of people to commit self-immolation in a single day, and the symbolic character of these incidents, which are intended as a strong message to the new Chinese leadership, is clear.

The number of Tibetans who have committed self-immolation since March 2011 is now 68, and even more worrying is the fact that those who choose this form of protest against violations of their fundamental freedoms are getting younger and younger.

The EU is China's most important trading partner, and the human rights clause always has a prominent role in EU trade agreements. Furthermore, there is an ongoing open dialogue between the EU and China (the most recent meeting took place on 30 May 2012) on the issue of human rights, while the EU arms embargo continues to apply to China. However, Tibetans are still being deprived of their fundamental freedoms, resulting in these tragic events.

In this context and in the light of the EU's human rights dialogue with China, will the Commission say:

- Is it aware of this turn of events?

- Does it intend to go beyond the usual positive comments and raise this issue more directly and urgently with the Chinese authorities, especially now that new contacts will be formed and programmatic statements exchanged between China and the EU owing to changes in the Chinese leadership?